

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 SAA-01 SES-02  
PM-05 INR-10 NSC-05 DODE-00 CIAE-00 /065 W  
-----029937 181704Z /53-S

R 181345Z AUG 78  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1570  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JERUSALEM 2308

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1 & 2  
TAGS: PBOR, MILI, UNSC, IS, LE, XF  
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: UNIFIL'S VIEWS

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 2260, (B) JERUSALEM 2247, (C) BEIRUT 4753

1. SUMMARY: ERSKINE AND AIME BELIEVE IT WOULD BE MISTAKE (A)  
TO MOVE PART OF LEBANESE BATTALION TO SRIFA AND (B) FOR UNIFIL  
TO TRY TO STRENGTHEN ITS PRESENCE IN THE ENCLAVES.

2. DURING MEETING WITH AIME (REF A), HE MENTIONED THAT UNIFIL  
HAD SENT UNNY AN ANALYSIS OF SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION. WE  
ARE FORWARDING THE REPORT SENT AUGUST 12 OR 13 SINCE IT GIVES  
INSIGHT INTO CURRENT THINKING OF SENIOR UNIFIL MILITARY AND  
CIVILIAN OFFICIALS.

3. BEGIN TEXT. 1. WE HAVE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO  
APPROACH OUTLINED AND PARTICULARLY ITS VARIOUS IMPOICATIONS.  
WE BELIEVE THAT ONLY A (LEBANESE MOVE WOULD BE CALLED OFF  
FOR TIME BEING AND THE LEBANESE CONTINGENT REMAIN IN  
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KAWKABA.) IS FEASIBLE UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. HOW-  
EVER, IT SHOULD BE A REDUCED CONTINGENT SINCE THE PRESENT  
FORCE IS VIEWED AS A POTENTIAL THREAT TO SECURITY OF  
CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES.

WE ARE VERY DOUBTFUL THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD FOR THE  
TIME BEING AGREE TO FACILITATE THE DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL  
DOWN TO ISRAELI BORDER. AS LONG AS THE DEGREE OF SYRIAN

INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTRY IS MAINTAINED, THEY WOULD PROBABLY OPPOSE SUCH DEPLOYMENT. FORTHERMORE, WE BELIEVE THAT A DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL UP TO THE ISRAELI BORDER MIGHT BE EMBARRASSING FOR UN SINCE THERE MIGHT BE STRONG ARAB PRESSURE TO CLOSE THE GATES, WHICH ARE THE VITAL LINK BETWEEN ISRAEL AND CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES. MILITARILY, UNIFIL IS NOT IN POSITION TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST DE FACTO FORCES. THE ONLY ASSURANCE THEY WOULD LIKE FROM US WOULD BE THAT WE PLEDGE NOT TO CLOSE GATES AND I DO NOT THINK WE CAN GIVE SUCH ASSURANCE ON BEHALF OF LEBANON GOVERNMENT. IN THE CLIMATE OF SUSPICION THAT EXISTS IN CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES AND ISRAEL AS RESULT OF SYRIAN POLICY IN AREA AND ACTION AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN THE NORTH, WE FEEL THAT WE WOULD BE ADDING TO THESE SUSPICIONS BY PROPOSING UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT IN ALL AREAS UP TO INTERNATIONAL BORDER. HADDAD AND THE MILITIAS HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED UNIFIL WAS PART OF SYRIAN PLOT TO TAKE OVER ENCLAVES. IT WILL TAKE TIME TO DISPEL THESE VIEWS, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE RECENT DECLARATIONS OF BEAVAN. GEN GAZIT, THE ISRAELI CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE, WHO VISITED US IN NAQOURA ON 10 AUGUST DREW AN INTERESTING COMPARISON BETWEEN US INFLUENCE OVER ISRAEL AND ISRAEL INFLUENCE OVER THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES. WHENEVER THE SECURITY OF EITHER ISRAEL OR THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES IS FELT AS BEING THEATENED, THEN THE INFLUENCE OF THE US AND/OR ISRAEL IS MINIMAL. WE BELIEVE THIS VIEW TO BE BASICALLY CORRECT. THERE ARE CERTAIN PROPOSALS FROM IDF

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OR ISRAEL THAT THE CHRISTIANS IN THE ENCLAVES ARE NOT ABOUT READY TO ACCEPT. THIS WOULD BE TRUE OF A STRONG LEBANESE ARMY PRESENCE IN THE SOUTH, OR THE DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL TO THE BORDER WHICH WOULD BE SEEN AS A THREAT TO THE GGATES.

2. BASICALLY, WE HAVE DEBATED WHETHER OR NOT UNIFIL SHOULD NOW ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE THE LEBANESE ARMY TO CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO ENTER THE SOUTH AND GIVEN THE CURRENT SITUATION AND CONDITIONS WHETHER ANY FURTHER IMMEDIATE ENTRY OF THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL PRODUCE ANY TANGIBLE BENEFITS TOWARD RESTORING THE LEBANESE AUTHORITY AND SOVEREIGNTY TO THE SOUTH.

3. WE WERE THINKING ALONG THE LINES OF A SYMBOLIC LEBANESE ARMY FORCE (UP TO ONE COMPANY) REMAINING IN THE KAUKABA AREA AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER SYMBOLIC PRESENCE BEING DEPLOYED IN THE SRIFA AREA. ACTUALLY, THERE IS NO BENEFIT GAINED BY AN ADDITIONAL PRESENCE IN SRIFA OTHER THAN TO SHOW THE LEBANESE FLAG. THERE REMAINS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT WITH THE CURRENT TENSION AND UNCERTAINTY OF THE SITUATION THAT EVEN A SYMBOLIC PRESENCE IN SRIFA OR

ANYWHERE WITHIN RANGE OF CHRISTIAN ARILLERY THAT ANOTHER  
KAUKABA-TYPE SITUATION COULD RESULT. WHETHER RIGHT OR  
WRONG THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA BELIEVE THAT THE LEBANESE TASK  
FORCE PRESENTLY IN KAUKABA IS QUOTE A PRO-SYRIAN ARMY UN-  
QUOTE. IT IS MOST DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE THEM OTHERWISE.  
THE MILITIA ARE SURE THAT THE TASK FORCE IS THERE TO QUOTE  
CLOSE THE GOOD FENCE AND DESTROY THE CHRISTIANS IN THE  
SOUTH UNQUOTE.

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4. WE ARE PLACING FEELERS OUT IN AN ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE  
WHAT REACTION THE IDF AND HADDAD WOULD HAVE TO SUCH A PLAN.

5. WE FEEL THAT ANY IMMEDIATE DEPLOYMENT OF UNIFIL FORCES  
INTO THE ENCLAVE AREA AS SUGGESTED IN PARA 1B (UNIFIL  
MOVEMENT INTO AND ALONG THE ISRAEL/LEBANON BORDER) OF  
REFERENCED MESSAGE WOULD FURTHER INCREASE THE TENSION IN  
THE AREA AND APPEAR TO BE FURTHER ATTEMPT BY UNIFIL TO SECURE  
POSITIONS WHICH COULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO THE CLOSING OF  
THE BORDER. PRESENTLY THE FURTHER ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDI-  
TIONAL UNIFIL POSITIONS IN THE ENCLAVE AREA ACCOMPLISHES  
LITTLE MORE THAN INCREASED NUMBERS OF POSITIONS WHICH  
THESE AS WELL AS THOSE POSITIONS PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED  
ARE NOT ABLE TO PERFORM MEANINGFUL MISSIONS AS A RESULT OF  
THE CONSTRAINTS PLACED BY THE MILITIAS.

6. WE HAVE BEEN HAVING RECENTLY INCREASING DOUTBS ABOUT THE REAL INTENTIONS OF THE LEBANESE TASK FORCE. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT SOME CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN AND MAY STILL BE BEING GIVEN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THE TASK FORCE FORCING ITS SECRET

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WAY THROUGH. IN FACT, THIS WOULD BE THE EASIEST POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT IMAPSSE AS FAR AS THE GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED. ANY OTHER SOLUTION MAY FURTHER DIVIDE THE OPPOSING FRACTIONS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

7. IN CONSULUSION, WE FEEL THAT WE HAVE REACHED A VERY CRITICAL PHASE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR MISSION. WE SHOULD START LOOKING AT UNIFIL'S ROLE BEYOND 19 SEPTEMBER IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A SECOND MANDATE SINCE THE PRESENT SITUATION IS NOT AT ALL CONDUCIVE TO FURTHER SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS. BETWEEN NOW AND 19 SEPTEMBER, WE SHOULD TRY TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION AND AVOID ANY ACTION WHICH MIGHT FURTHER INFLAME PASSIONS IN THE AREA. WHAT MAY BE GOOD FOR THE LEBANESE ARMY POLITICALLY MAY BE COUNTER PRODUCTIVE AS FAR AS OUR CREDIBILITY AND LONG-TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF UNIFIL IS CONCERNED. UNTIL THE SITUATION IMPROVES, WE WILL REFRAIN FROM TAKING ANY STEPS TO INCREASE OUR PRESENCE IN THE ENCLAVE SINCE THIS MAY BE MISINTERPRETED AND RESULT IN INCREASED TENSION.

8. OUR PREOCCUPATION NOW SHOULD BE TO INSURE THE RENEWAL OF THE MANDATE AS THERE IS REALLY VERY LITTLE THAT CAN BE DONE FOR THE TIME BEING TO RESTORE LEBANESE SOVEREIGHTY IN THE SOUTH. END TEXT

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NOTE BY OCT: DISTRIBUTION PER MS. ROBINSON, S/S-O.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES, MILITARY PLANS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 18 aug 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1 & 2  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
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**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** PBOR, MILI, IS, LE, XF, UNSC, UNIFIL, (ERSKINE, EMMANUEAL A), (AIME, JEAN CLAUDE)  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014